UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

PROGRAM: Special Feature: How to Control Fleas.

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(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

ANNOUNCEMENT: The United States Department of Agriculture has received a large number of requests for a radio talk on fleas lately. Fleas cause an amount of annoyance out of all proportion to their size at any time; but they are especially troublesome during hot weather. Fortunately, it's not hard to get rid of them. This brief chat tells how.

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My neighbor, Mrs. Van-Smith just got back from a 4-weeks' vacation the other day. I think I was the first one in town that she visited after she got back. And she didn't visit me for social purposes as the rest of this chat will show.

Mrs. Van-Smith's house had been closed up during the time she was away. Closed up tight. Well, Mrs. Van-Smith and her family came back to our town all fresh, rosy, and cheerful after the fine vacation they had had. I saw them arrive, so I happen to know.

The morning after, Mrs. Van-Smith paid me a call.

"Good morning, Mr. Webb", she said. "I understand that you have made quite a study of insects and insect pests".

"Why yes, Mrs. Van-Smith", said I, sparring for time. You see I didn't quite know what my visitor was driving at. "Why yes. I am supposed to know something about the habits and the life-histories of many of the insects we have around here. Why do you ask?"

Mrs. Van-Smith smiled. "Because our house is literally full of fleas", she whispered loudly.

I threw up my hands in mock dismay. "You don't say!" I gasped.

"Yes, indeed", said Mrs. Van-Smith. "And I can't understand where they have come from. Before we closed up the house to go on our vacation, there wasn't a flea

in the house. But now——", and she paused significantly.

"Where did you find these fleas?" I asked.

"Principally on my ankles", she answered smilingly. "You see, I went down into the basement last night to open the windows and look about, and I met with the warmest reception I have ever received."

"Fleas don't always avoid human beings—— at least some fleas don't," said I.

"I am sure you are right", said Mrs. Van-Smith.

"But sit down", said I, "and I'll tell you how to get rid of them. It's not at all unusual to find the cellar or basement of a house infested with fleas first of all. The little pests often use the basement as the base of operations in spreading to other parts of the house. Very often we find that a dog or cat has had access to the house and carried the fleas along with it."

"Come to think of it, I believe our cat was able to get in and out while we were away", said Mrs. Van-Smith.

"Perhaps that explains it". And then I continued. "It's a good thing to take prompt action in getting rid of fleas. Otherwise they become an unbearable pest. If your cat left fleas in the basement, they're probably pretty hungry by now and will attack anyone who goes down there. Fortunately, it isn't hard to get rid of fleas, however."

"How do you do it?" asked my visitor. "That's what I want to know."

"If the fleas are in the basement of the house, the first thing to do is to clean up any rubbish that may be on the floor. Then spray the floor with CREOSOTE OIL. You can buy Creosote Oil from a paint store. In an ordinary city basement, two or three gallons of the oil should be used. Spray it on with a small force spray pump."

At that point Mrs. Van-Smith cut in with a question. "Is it necessary to spray the walls and ceiling?" she asked.

"No. Spray the floor well. You don't have to worry about the walls and ceiling", I replied.

"I think there are a few fleas on the upper floors of the house, too", the lady said. "Is it all right to spray the floors above the basement with creosote oil, too?"

"No," said I. "The best thing to use for the upper floors is NAPHTHALENE FLAKES. First wipe up the floors with gasoline or kerosene. Then sprinkle the naphthalene flakes liberally over the floors. You ought to put enough of the flakes on the floor to make it white. Let the naphthalene remain on the floors for two or three days. Don't sweep it up. By that time the fleas should be gone".

"I see", said Mrs. Van-Smith. "Come to think of it, I imagine there must be some fleas on the cat. How can I get rid of them?"

"We advise the use of CREOLIN for that purpose", I replied. "You can buy creolin at drugstores. Scrub the animal thoroughly. Be sure that you soak the fleas on the dog or cat's head. This will rid the cat of any fleas it may have already on it, but won't keep fleas away if you allow the cat to go where there are fleas".

"Is it all right to use creolin for dogs, too?" Mrs. Van-Smith wanted to know.

"Certainly", said I.

Mrs. Van-Smith arose to go. "Thank you very much for the information", she said. "I'm going to invite you over for dinner some time--- but not until I apply the flea remedy at our house".

"Thank you", said I.

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